

TFL's Capitol Connection: Bills that survived, died in '2nd funnel'

TFL's Drew Zahn sits down with Capitol Team members Chuck Hurley and Danny Carroll to talk about three priority bills that are still eligible for debate this session after the "2nd Funnel" deadline and three bills that will have to wait until 2020:

- *Get the facts on the radical Iowa Supreme Court ruling on abortion that has prompted calls for a constitutional amendment.*
- *Visit www.ShesABaby.com today!*

Below is breakdown of the bills TFL has been tracking and their current status in the Iowa legislature:

Bills TFL supports and are still alive:

TFL Position	Bill #	Topic	Description	Status
For	SF 237	Judicial Selection	Replaces lawyer-selected commissioners with commissioners appointed by Iowa elected officials	Awaiting House Vote
For	HF 503	Judicial Selection	Replaces lawyer-selected commissioners with commissioners appointed by Iowa elected officials	Awaiting House Vote
For	HF 594	Alfie Evans Act	Forbids courts from requiring the withdrawal of life-sustaining care to a child over the objection of a parent	Awaiting Senate Vote
For	HF 721	Safe Families	Creates a simplified power of attorney to help Iowa ministries better handle family struggles	Awaiting House Vote
For	SF 540	Safe Families	Creates a simplified power of attorney to help Iowa ministries better handle family struggles	Awaiting House Vote
For	HCR 8	Pornography Resolution	Recognizes porn as a health crisis and calls on the justice department to enforce obscenity laws	Awaiting House Vote
For	SSB 1103	Adoption Tax Credit	Allows adoption expenses incurred prior to the tax year to be reimbursed for adoptions completed in the tax year.	Awaiting Senate Subcommittee
For	HF 338	Adoption Tax Credit	Allows adoption expenses incurred prior to the tax year to be reimbursed for adoptions completed in the tax year.	Awaiting Senate Subcommittee
For	SF 515	Adoption Birth Certificate	Allows adult adoptees to get a copy of their original birth certificate	Awaiting Senate Vote
For	HF 746	Adoption Birth Certificate	Allows adult adoptees to get a copy of their original birth certificate	Awaiting House Subcommittee
For	HF 752	Professional Licensing	Allows Iowans with criminal records to discover if their record prevents them from getting a license before they pay for the license	Awaiting Senate Subcommittee
For	SF 210	Iowa CARE Act	Requires hospitals to establish policies and allow patients to designate a lay caregiver	Awaiting Governor Signature
For	HF 734	DNA Profiling	Allows a convicted criminal to apply for DNA profiling to determine if DNA testing would have proven innocence	Awaiting Senate Vote
For	SF 594	DNA Profiling	Allows a convicted criminal to apply for DNA profiling to determine if DNA testing would have proven innocence	Awaiting Senate Vote

Bills TFL supported, but are dead:

TFL Position	Bill #	Topic	Description
For	SJR 21	Life Amendment	Declares there is no "right to abortion" in the Iowa Constitution and prevents Iowa Courts from requiring taxpayers fund abortions
For	SF 508	Religious Freedom Restoration Act	Protects Iowans' religious freedom and expression from Iowa courts
For	SF 523	Unborn Person Homicide	Increases it to a Class A felony to nonconsensually kill an unborn child or kill a pregnant woman in commission of a different crime
For	SF 460	Parent Showing Child Porn	Removes exemption for parents from penalties for showing their minor children illegal pornography
For	HJR 14	Governor's Felon voting	Returns voting rights to Iowans who have discharged their sentences
For	SF 476	Adoptive Parent Leave	Requires employers to give the same leave to an adoptive parent as a parent of a newborn child
For	HF 697	Nonprofit Donor Privacy	Protects donor privacy by forbidding public agencies from requiring nonprofits to give out donor information

Bills TFL Oppose/Undecided, and are still alive:

TFL Position	Bill #	Topic	Description	Status
Against	SF 366	Gambling Bill	Legalizes fantasy sports gambling, sports betting in casinos and racetracks, and sports betting on smartphones and computers	Awaiting Senate Vote
Against	HF 748	Gambling Bill	Legalizes fantasy sports gambling, sports betting in casinos and racetracks, and sports betting on smartphones and computers	Awaiting House Subcommittee
Against	SSB 1105	Payday Lending	Legalizes payday lending for loans between \$500-\$1,000	Awaiting Senate Subcommittee
Against	HSB 243	Payday Lending	Legalizes payday lending for loans between \$500-\$1,000	Awaiting House Subcommittee
Undecided	SF 513	Hormonal Contraceptives	May allow abortifacients to be sold by pharmacists without a prescription	Awaiting Senate Vote
Undecided	HF 727	Hormonal Contraceptives	May allow abortifacients to be sold by pharmacists without a prescription	Awaiting Senate Vote

Reynolds proclaims Sunday day of prayer for flooding

On Friday, April 5, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaimed Sunday, April 7, a day of prayer for the victims of extreme flooding that has hit primarily western Iowa and our neighbors in Nebraska and Missouri.

The proclamation originated with TFL's neighboring state ally, the Nebraska Family Alliance. On the west side of the flooded Missouri River, Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts has also designated Sunday, April 7, as a day of prayer for flood victims.

Following the Nebraska Family Alliance's suggestion, The FAMiLY LEADER contacted Gov. Reynolds, who quickly agreed to join with Gov. Ricketts in declaring a day of prayer.

In addition to prayer, the official proclamation calls on Iowans to donate "their time, skills, and resources to serve their neighbors within and alongside the many organizations providing disaster relief."

Iowa, and particularly its western counties, has seen widespread flooding after the snowmelt from blizzard

conditions across the Midwest. According to a report from the Des Moines Register, 12 levees, including four in Iowa, have been breached by the historic floodwaters.

Gov. Reynolds' proclamation declares that, "Whereas prayer provides peace and guidance in times of crisis and conflict, and reminds us of the comforting assurance of God's love for us all ... it seems right and fitting that the citizens of Iowa are urged to pray for the well-being of our fellow citizens and our State, to pray for all those in other states who are hurt by this disaster, to pray for those who are working to respond to the crisis, and to pray for all recovery efforts."

Following the signing of the proclamation, Gov. Reynolds answered reporter questions about efforts to seek a long-term solution to the Missouri River levee system.

Several members of The FAMiLY LEADER staff were on hand for the signing and had the opportunity to pray with the governor after the signing.

Former film critic reviews pro-life movie "Unplanned"

by Drew Zahn

They were all there – the screaming anti-abortion zealots, the coldhearted abortion executives, the grieving family members, the scared girls, the gentle prayer warriors, the conscience-seared doctors, the boyfriends and fathers callously dismissing an inconvenient pregnancy as "her problem," the earnest pro-lifers trying to save babies' lives, and the clinic volunteers who genuinely believe that offering abortion

helps women in the face of unimaginable distress.

They were all gathered at the fence, the black, wrought-iron fence that surrounds Planned Parenthood, crying out to be heard. And each gets their moment on screen in the heart-wrecking, heart-warming film "Unplanned," showing in theaters now.

This is what makes "Unplanned" such a worthy and important entry in the decades-long debate over abortion in America. This, and the fact that it's based on the true story of a decorated Planned Parenthood clinic director, Abby Johnson.

Watch the trailer below:

Abby's tale, told in "Unplanned," speaks not with rhetoric or vilification, but with experience. Abby was the scared girl, afraid to tell her parents of her pregnancy, bleeding on the abortion table. She was the young woman, suffering at the hands of a callous man, writhing in pain from a medically induced abortion she suffered at home, alone. She was the idealistic college student, defending a woman's "right to choose." She was a volunteer, a counselor, and eventually director of a Planned Parenthood clinic. She stood on the inside of the fence and watched the pro-life protesters, some who terrified the girls coming for an abortion, others who comforted and cared for them.

And then one day ... she saw something that changed everything.

Abby Johnson became the woman who was devastated by the guilt of helping over 20,000 women end their babies' lives. She became the woman praying at the fence. She became the earnest pro-lifer trying to save both women and children from the horrors she herself had overseen.

This is why you and ***everyone** you know needs to see "Unplanned": It tells the story through the eyes of every pro-

lifer and every pro-choicer standing at that fence, because it tells Abby's story, and she's been all of them.

In an age when public debate becomes bitter division, when opposing sides are quick to call the other a "woman hater" or a "baby killer," we need to see through others' eyes, to understand their heart before we seek to change their mind.

Because the real enemy isn't the abortion clinic worker or the pro-life activist.

But there are real enemies to both truth and love in the controversy over abortion. There are users and liars, and there is genuine evil that is driving an industry that has killed over 60 million Americans in the womb and scarred scores of millions of women.

We must see this movie – one, because it's long past time we see through others' eyes, to learn to speak both truth and love in this debate, and two, because we dare not turn a blind eye to what's happening to our daughters when we're afraid to see ... what Abby saw.

** "Unplanned" is rated R for the realistic, and therefore gruesome, depiction of abortion procedures. This is not a film for children or those whose hearts cannot look into the face of evil and pain. Women who have suffered abortion, or even miscarriage, may find the film's first several minutes to be particularly difficult. Those first several minutes will be difficult for almost any audience to watch.*

- **See where "Unplanned" is playing and reserve your tickets here: UnplannedTickets.com**
- **I've seen the movie! What can I do next? Visit www.ShesABaby.com now for several things YOU can do today to make a difference.**
- **Looking for help? Or want to know how you can help others? The makers of "Unplanned" have created a page of resources, a help line, and organizations that will care**

for YOU.

Drew Zahn is the former film critic for WorldNetDaily and today serves as director of communications for The FAMIly LEADER

National report: TFL changing the 'spiritual temperature'

On a wintry, snow-covered Wednesday in February, a film crew from Christian Broadcasting Network, or CBN, flew from Washington, D.C., to Des Moines to cover a story in the Heartland that has national implications.

The work of The FAMIly LEADER's Church Ambassador Network had piqued CBN's interest. And when the network heard Iowa's successful model of building intentional relationships between pastors and legislators was now spreading to other states ... CBN booked a flight to Des Moines to learn just how TFL is changing the way the Church interacts with government in America:

Watch CBN's coverage of TFL's Church Ambassador Network below:

Through ministries like the Church Ambassador Network and the If 7:14 prayer initiative, The FAMIly LEADER is pioneering a strategy of inspiring the Church to engage government for the advance of God's (not man's) kingdom. Rather than a politics-first approach, TFL's model focuses first on cultural transformation, anchoring our ministry in prayer and leading with the gospel.

TFL recognizes that a Church that is biblically and

authentically engaged with government will not only transform individual lives and relationships, but also impact elections, influence policy, and lead the way toward a revived America that honors God and blesses people.

And now, though **“The Daniel Initiative,”** TFL is exporting this model of authentic Church engagement to other states. By partnering with sister state organizations of The Family Policy Alliance, TFL’s “The Daniel Initiative” aims to build a fortress of states that can transform a nation!

TFL is grateful to CBN for covering the powerful impact of our ministry and grateful to you, our supporters, for enabling us to embark on the bold, nation-transforming vision of The Daniel Initiative!

Do YOU want to see a Church revived and impacting government in a biblical way? Your support of The FAMiLY LEADER will help spread The Daniel Initiative across America!

TFL’s Capitol Connection: Planned Parenthood sex ed in Iowa schools

TFL’s Drew Zahn, Chuck Hurley, and Danny Carroll highlight a brewing controversy at the Capitol over YOUR tax dollars paying for Planned Parenthood to teach sex education in Iowa’s public schools:

Visit www.ShesABaby.com today!

Get the facts on the radical Iowa Supreme Court ruling on

abortion that has prompted calls for a constitutional amendment.

TFL's COVID 19 Response Page

Election 2016: What a mysterious God we serve!

by Bob Vander Plaats ~

As Christians, we know we serve a mysterious God. We know it intuitively as we look back and see God's guiding hand directing our path in unplanned ways. And we know it from Scripture, as Isaiah 55 proclaims, "His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways His ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts."

These verses and the term "mysterious" kept resonating in my spirit as I watched last night's shocking election results. The pundits and experts were stunned. The educated and intellectuals were at a loss for words. And the typically correct forecasters watched their election models and predictions plummet as state after state reported their results.

The afternoon of the election, I joined a private conference call to learn the best insight gleaned from exit polling. On

this call, Hillary Clinton was all but crowned our next president. It was going to be a short night. Hillary would be affirmed. Mr. Trump would be repudiated. The U.S. Senate would be in Democrat majority, and the Republican Party would be fatally splintered.

Yet none of this happened. In fact, the exact opposite happened.

The country and the watching world are shocked. Mysterious!

After Mr. Trump became the presumptive nominee of the Republican Party, I had an opportunity for a one-on-one visit in his office. We discussed the high accountability of leadership and God's standard for choosing our leaders.

Mr. Trump was innately confident that he was going to win, and I could see why. During the earlier primary season, there were too many times, under any sense of normal circumstances, he should have been defeated. Toast. Done. Yet, he wasn't. He kept winning. He was constantly underestimated by many, me included, and he kept on winning. Now, he's President-Elect Donald Trump. Mysterious!

During this election season neither I nor the ministry I lead, The FAMiLY LEADER, endorsed a presidential nominee. Instead, we engaged thousands around the world in praying for God's hand on this election and for America's revival. We called on the church to be the church by restoring its role as a prophetic voice to the king, as Nathan was to David. And we urged the church to begin this restoration by voting ... and vote, they did. All early results show a historic turnout among evangelicals and people of faith.

So while Donald Trump will be the next president and Republicans will hold majorities in the House and Senate, there's one storyline I don't want to get lost in the mystery of how the election turned out: namely, that the church showed up. Regardless of who won, the church did bathe this election

in a renewed commitment to prayer. The church heard the call to consider their vote an act of honoring God. And they confounded the establishment, the media, and the elite by showing up to vote like never before!

At The FAMiLY LEADER, we referenced these calls for the church to engage as “thinking bigger.” For in earnest prayer and seeking to honor God we find peace in navigating difficult choices; we recognize our hope is not in earthly princes and/or kings, but in the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ.

We now hope and pray that the awakening of the church will continue, that our country will be restored to that “shining city on a hill” and “beacon in the night” as we turn our collective hearts to God, His principles, His precepts, His design, and His righteousness.

If we answer this call of our day, it will dwarf the impact of who beat who on Tuesday night. It will prove to be a historic victory for a revived America that honors God and blesses people.

Click here now to download the top 7 things we as Christians need to start doing the day after Election Day!

Top 7 things Christians must do after Election Day

During this election season, many Christians have been discouraged by discord in the Body of Christ. The enemy has been working overtime to fester divisiveness, distracting Christians from being salt and light to a desperate culture.

But the election is over now. **What's next?**

The free handout you can read and download by **clicking here** is our first step toward healing and hope in the aftermath of Election 2016.

Church and State Moment: Church and city work together for healing



At 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 3, four separate Des Moines metro pastor networks gathered together at Zion Lutheran Church in Des Moines. These pastors were from churches of different denominations, theologies, and races. Some were from the suburbs, others from the city. But that morning they gathered together as one to pray for and support leaders of the Des Moines Police Department, the mayor of Des Moines, and the city's city manager.

It was events of the past week that led to this miraculous meeting ...

On Tuesday, Nov. 1, Christian community leaders gathered for a Faith At Work luncheon, which opened with a devotion from Des Moines Chief of Police Dana Wingert. They heard a moving account of how the community and the police department were coming together to strengthen the city of Des Moines. Little did the chief and those attending know how much this would be true just a few, short hours later.

Early the next morning, Officer Justin Martin of the Urbandale Police Department and Sgt. Anthony Beminio of the Des Moines Police Department were shot and killed. The City of Des Moines woke up the next day in shock. This was the first time an officer had been killed like this since 1977. This was not supposed to happen in a city like Des Moines.

With two police departments mourning the loss of their own and a city full of grief, anger, and confusion, what an opportunity this was for the church to rise up and bring comfort to the people of Des Moines!

Churches across Des Moines held worship services on Wednesday night, providing a place of comfort and prayer for many in the community, including many police officers. Police chaplains, as well, have put in long hours, and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association sent four chaplains who are experts in disaster response to Des Moines.

Congregation members across the city sent letters of support, delivered flowers, prayed, and one little girl gave all her Halloween candy to the Urbandale Police Department. Christ's love and comfort were poured on the city of Des Moines.

Christ's love and comfort were poured on the city of Des Moines.

Which brings us back to Zion Lutheran Church. On Thursday morning, Nov. 3, the church in Des Moines was one. And it was there to be a help and support to God's ministers of the

state. These pastors and ministry leaders shared tears, hugs, prayers, grief, and ideas with the government officials of the city. They were working together to begin the healing process for the City of Des Moines and its police department.

This would not have been possible if it were not for the pastors' years of hard labor building favor with the city, leading up to this moment. They have served in the police department, in the public schools, and in the city hall. They have poured their hearts and lives into Des Moines' government officials. They did not know what God was preparing in advance for them, but because of these years of ministry, Des Moines' leaders knew where to turn in the city's dark hour.

As we see a nation in desperate spiritual need, not just in Des Moines, but across the country, we must remember that God designed His institutions of the church and state to work together. In Des Moines they need each other. And together in Des Moines, they will bring healing to a city plagued with violence, mourning, anger, grief, and confusion. The same can be true for our whole nation.

Man of God: Martin Luther King Jr.

Commentary by Greg Baker ~

Cultural transformation does not come through winning arguments, legal battles, or elections. It does not come through hateful rhetoric or violence.

As a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. understood that if you want to transform a nation, it

must be done through spiritual transformation. He changed the world by boldly speaking truth and refusing to return evil for evil. If we want true transformation today, we must do the same.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on Jan. 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, the son of a Baptist minister. His original name was Michael, but his father changed both he and his son's name to Martin Luther after a moving spiritual visit to Germany in 1934. Martin Luther King Jr. attended Crozer Theological Seminary and later received his doctorate from Boston University. In 1954, at the age of 25, Martin Luther King Jr. was called to be a pastor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

Just one year later, life began to change for Dr. King. In March of 1955, Claudette Colvin, a pregnant 15-year-old black woman, refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white man, violating Montgomery city laws. She was handcuffed and arrested. That same year, in December, Rosa Parks would refuse to give up her seat on a city bus and was arrested. These, and other events, led Dr. King and other community members to organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

The boycott took an economic toll on the bus system, but the city would not go down without a fight. City leaders persuaded insurance companies to refuse to insure any cars that were being used to carpool African-Americans and they forced all cabs to charge a uniform \$.45, rather than the \$.10 rate that had been charged by drivers supporting the boycott.

But that didn't stop the black community. They walked, rode bikes, and some even rode horses and mules. Sidewalks were packed and buses were empty. Black churches across the nation raised money to buy new shoes for those who were participating in the boycott.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. understood that if you want to

transform a nation, it must be done through spiritual transformation.

When it became clear to segregationists that they were not going to win, they resorted to violence. King's home was firebombed, along with four Baptist churches. The boycott did not come to an end until June 4, 1956, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation laws for buses were unconstitutional.

Martin Luther King Jr. became known for civil disobedient acts, such as the boycott, and through them this Baptist preacher would change the world. Malcom X and others claimed these efforts would be fruitless, arguing only through pain could America be changed. But Martin Luther King Jr. never believed that. He had a respect for man and believed that people would be won over by love rather than violence and hateful rhetoric.

“By opening our lives to God in Christ, we become new creatures. This experience, which Jesus spoke of as the new birth, is essential if we are to be transformed,” Dr. King said. “Only through an inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit.”

Darkest before the dawn

In the darkest hour of the Civil Rights Movement, King and fellow activists shined the brightest. In April 1963, black people in Birmingham, Alabama, occupied public spaces with marches and sit-ins, openly violating segregation laws they viewed as unjust. Though these protests were peaceful, Birmingham Police Chief Eugene Connor used high-pressure water jets and police dogs against protestors, including children. Many protestors were arrested, including Rev. King.

Following his 13th arrest, Rev. King wrote the famous “Letter

from a Birmingham Jail," in which he said, "Wherever the early Christians entered a town, the power structure got disturbed and immediately sought to convict them for being 'disturbers of the peace' and 'outside agitators.' But they went on with the conviction that they were a 'colony of heaven' and had to obey God rather than man. They were small in number but big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be 'astronomically intimidated.' They brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contest. Things are different now. The contemporary Church is so often a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. It is so often the arch-supporter of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the Church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the Church's silent and often vocal sanction of things as they are."

Dr. King's labor in Birmingham was not in vain. What happened in Birmingham shined a light on the terrible atrocities happening to blacks across the nation. Just a few months after Birmingham, King would give the famous "I have a dream" speech in front of 250,000 people at the Lincoln Memorial.

Just prior to the speech, Rev. King met with President Kennedy to discuss a national civil rights law. He would contact President Kennedy to discuss civil rights 13 times throughout his presidency.

In their final communication King wrote: "I will sincerely plead with my people to remain non-violent in the face of this terrible provocation. However, I am convinced, that unless some steps are taken by the federal government ... my pleas shall fall on deaf ears, and we shall see the worst racial holocaust the nation has ever seen."

Dr. King's words and endless efforts were heard, and in July 1964 the Civil Rights Act passed, just over a year after Birmingham. King's efforts of civil disobedience motivated not by hate or bitterness, but rather by love, had worked.

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a pastor that changed the world. He was a good shepherd. Like all men, he was not perfect, but he was committed to serving Christ. Just as the prophets Nathan and Elijah stood up to kings who did wrong, so did Dr. King. He stood up against injustice in government and corrected the "king."

Yet King's stand did not come without sacrifice. Like many men of God before him, it cost Dr. King his life. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968.

We can learn much from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We must stand up to injustice that we see in the world. As the church, we must correct our government when it is walking away from the heart of God. We must not do so with violence and hatred. Rather we must do so with the love of Christ.

"Now there is a final reason I think that Jesus says, 'Love your enemies,'" Dr. King said. "It is this: that love has within it a redemptive power. And there is a power there that eventually transforms individuals."

Wanted: Shepherds on a mission to guide our nation



by Greg Baker

Across all of His creation, the divine nature of the Good Shepherd can be clearly seen (Romans 1:20). From businesses to schools, governments, families, churches, sports, and even entertainment, when leaders are good shepherds, their organizations thrive. Why? Because God designed the world to have shepherds. That is why changing a head coach can turn a failing football program into national champions. Or why a new CEO can save a company.

The world needs these good shepherds. And yet, shepherds in every facet of our society have fallen under attack, with many missing and our nation suffering. If we are to restore our nation, it must include the return of good shepherds to all facets of our culture, including our government.

Why are shepherds under attack? Because Satan knows if he gets the shepherd, he can get the sheep. We saw this when Jesus died on the cross: After His death, His disciples fled and cowered, and it wasn't until the Chief Shepherd was resurrected that we began to see the building of the church.

In God's institution of government, the shepherd is the head of state. The head of state sets the example of what it means to be a citizen of a country, and the people will rise and fall with that standard.

In America, presidents serve as our heads of state. They have what President Roosevelt called “the bully pulpit of the nation.” The American president is the face of America, and people watch and follow their presidents’ examples.

A good shepherd in this role doesn’t merely reflect the character of the people, but leads it, setting a standard of righteousness that inspires the people toward greater things. For example, under the poor leadership of King Ahab, the people were led to worship Baal; while King Josiah worshipped only the God of Israel, and the people responded and tore down their idols. In the kingdom of God, the heads of state matter. They matter greatly.

And I’d argue the head of state is perhaps the most important job of the president of the United States as well. Yet we too often overlook it. We focus instead on the commander in chief and chief executive components of the position. Not only the voters, but the candidates lose sight of the power of the shepherd.

If Satan truly wanted to tear our nation down, he could hardly develop a more effective strategy.

President Abraham Lincoln, however, understood the significance of his shepherd position as head of state. Throughout his presidency Lincoln called America to prayer and repentance. He understood that the Civil War was far more than a physical war, but a spiritual battle raging in the spiritual realm as well.

America needs a head of state today who understands the shepherding components of the position. As Christians, we must not choose chief executives only, but remember the importance of the shepherd and seek to elect men like Abraham Lincoln: heads of state who not only fear the Lord, but who are setting an example in pursuing righteousness.

An even wider battle

Unfortunately, shepherds are not only under attack in government, but in all of God's institutions, including His church. Satan has filled denominations and seminaries with all manner of false doctrine and teaching, compromising the shepherds of the church, the pastors. In too many congregations today, rather than standing up and protecting their flock from false teaching that undermines the Word of God and proclaims salvation outside of Jesus, pastors defend it and teach it. Rather than warning their congregation from sin and defending them, they encourage it. Rather than correcting the sheep about to enter a raging river, the pastors not only help them get in, they join in. Satan knew if he took out the pastors, he could get the church. Imagine the millions of Americans who go to church on Sundays but who will never hear the gospel. Why? Because their shepherd has no clue how to guide them to it. The church must have its shepherd in order to be strong and healthy.

Francis Asbury, one of the founders of the Methodist Church in America, understood this when he was sent to America in the 1700s by John Wesley. He knew the poor spiritual condition of the American church was a direct result of not having good shepherds. Asbury gave his life to raising up pastors in America, and by the time of his death, he had ordained over 4,000 ministers.

America needs men like Asbury today, men committed to discipling future good shepherds in God's church. If good shepherds return to churches in America, the church will be revived.

God's third social institution, the family, is similarly hurting in America, and again, one of the main reasons is the physical and mental absence of fathers, the shepherds of the family. Either dad is gone, or if he is present, he is doing little to lead his family. Rather than being the visionary, guide, and primary example in the family, dad has taken the back seat. Many men now do not know how to be fathers and some

feel they are not even needed. Satan has fed lies into our culture and into our men. He understood that if fathers were out of the picture, he could devour the family.

The church must engage in raising up and supporting fathers again. The church must train men to be leaders in every facet of their life and to start in the home. If the American family is to be restored, it will be restored by fathers returning as shepherds of their families.

Our world today is in desperate need of shepherds. The sheep are lost, sick, and being ravaged by wolves. Without the shepherd they will perish. We must pray for the shepherds of our nation. If you have good shepherds in your life, be thankful. Honor them, and do not make their job more difficult. Pray that God would protect them and that He would raise more of them up. Pray for the good shepherds to return.

‘Victory for churches’ in Iowa religious liberty case



Pastor Michael Demastus (in gray), and attorneys from Alliance Defending

Freedom

“This is fantastic news,” says an Iowa pastor, following a U.S. District Court judge’s order in a key case for religious liberty in Iowa, “a victory for churches all over the state.”

Pastor Michael Demastus of Ft. Des Moines Church of Christ filed the case, with the aid of Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys, after a pair of vague brochures from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission suggested the state has authority over churches when they’re deemed “public accommodations” or when the church’s activities are not “religious” in nature.

“The commission’s interpretation,” ADF explained, “could censor church statements on biblical sexuality in certain contexts and force churches to open their restrooms to members of the opposite sex under conditions that the government dictates.”

But in her order, U.S. District Court Judge Stephanie Rose torpedoed that idea. Furthermore, she denied the state’s attempt to have the case dismissed.

“In its decision allowing the suit to continue,” ADF stated, “the court found that ... churches have never been public accommodations subject to government regulation, and state officials have no business trying to decide which church activities are religious and which ones aren’t.”

The judge’s order marks a significant victory in the case, but it’s not a final victory. Pastor Demastus, in a Facebook post, warned, “The case will be further litigated. There is more to come! Continue to pray!”

Chuck Hurley, vice president and legal counsel for The FAMILY LEADER, commended Demastus and Ft. Des Moines Church of Christ for bringing the case forward.

“It’s a brave thing, going to federal court,” Hurley said.

“It’s time consuming and stressful, but they are taking a stand for all of Iowa’s 5,200 churches. They’re trying to keep a window for the gospel open by preventing so-called ‘civil rights’ codes from chilling biblical speech and ministry.”

Demastus also told The FAMiLY LEADER he has a message for his fellow pastors: “Be encouraged! Don’t be scared to stand up when there is wrong. It’s OK to speak out when there is an injustice being done, and this attack on religious liberty is definitely an injustice.”